IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 47 - 49 without prejudice. Please amend Claims 35, 38, 40, 42 - 45, 50, and 52 as follows.

1 - 4. (Previously Cancelled)

1 5. (Once Amended / Previously Amended) A method of etching a shaped cavity in a substrate, wherein initial etching of said shaped cavity is performed using an initial process chamber pressure, wherein continued etching of the shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 25% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, and wherein etching of said shaped cavity is followed by an etch finishing step, wherein said etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 80% to about 100% of said initial process chamber pressure.

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10 6. (Once Amended / Previously Amended) A method of etching a shaped cavity in a substrate, wherein the method comprises:

a) an initial cavity etch step during which said substrate is etched to form a shaped cavity using an initial process chamber pressure;

b) at least one additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 25 % to about 50 % lower than said initial process chamber pressure; and

c) an additional etch step following step b), during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 40 % lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of step b).

11 ~~7.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~6~~ 10, wherein said etch step c) is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 40% to about 50% lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of etch step b).

12 ~~8.~~ (Original) The method of Claim ~~6~~ 10, wherein said method further comprises an etch finishing step, wherein said etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 80 % to about 100 % of said initial process chamber pressure.

13 ~~9.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~8~~ 12, wherein said etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is about 90% of said initial process chamber pressure.

14 ~~10.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~6~~ 10, or Claim ~~8~~ 12, wherein said substrate comprises single-crystal silicon, and etching is performed using a plasma containing reactive fluorine species.

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11. (Previously Cancelled)

15 ~~12.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~10~~ 14, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of O_2, HBr, Cl_2, N_2, and combinations thereof.

16 ~~13.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~6~~ 10 or Claim ~~8~~ 12, wherein etching is performed using a plasma generated from a source gas comprising a gas selected from the group consisting of SF_6, CF_4, Cl_2, HBr, and combinations thereof.

18 14. (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~13~~ 16, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of Ar, O_2, N_2, and combinations thereof, wherein said additive gas is provided in an amount sufficient to improve profile control during etching.

17 15. (Original) The method of Claim ~~13~~ 16, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an essentially nonreactive, diluent gas selected from the group consisting of He and Xe.

19 16. (Original) The method of Claim ~~14~~ 18, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an essentially nonreactive, diluent gas selected from the group consisting of He and Xe.

17 - 22. (Previously Cancelled)

C1 20 ~~23~~. (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~6~~ 10 or Claim ~~8~~ 12, wherein said method includes performing the following steps prior to said initial cavity etch step: etching said substrate to a predetermined depth to form a shaped opening, then forming a conformal protective layer overlying at least a sidewall of said shaped opening, wherein said protective layer comprises a material having a different etch selectivity than said substrate

21 ~~24~~. (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~23~~ 20, wherein said substrate comprises single-crystal silicon and said protective layer comprises silicon oxide.

25 - 26. (Previously Cancelled)

2 ~~27~~. (Previously Added) The method of Claim ~~5~~ 1, wherein said substrate comprises single-crystal silicon, and etching is performed using a plasma containing reactive fluorine species.

3 28. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 27, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of O_2, HBr, Cl_2, N_2, and combinations thereof.

4 29. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 5, wherein etching is performed using a plasma generated from a source gas comprising a gas selected from the group consisting of SF_6, CF_4, Cl_2, HBr, and combinations thereof.

6 30. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 29, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of Ar, O_2, N_2, and combinations thereof, wherein said additive gas is provided in an amount sufficient to improve profile control during etching.

C1 5 31. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 29, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an essentially nonreactive, diluent gas selected from the group consisting of He and Xe.

7 32. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 30, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an essentially nonreactive, diluent gas selected from the group consisting of He and Xe.

8 33. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 5, wherein said method includes performing the following steps prior to said initial cavity etch step: etching said substrate to a predetermined depth to form a shaped opening, then forming a conformal protective layer overlying at least a sidewall of said shaped opening, wherein said protective layer comprises a material having a different etch selectivity than said substrate.

9 ~~34.~~ (Previously Added) The method of Claim ~~33~~ 8, wherein said substrate comprises single-crystal silicon and said protective layer comprises silicon oxide.

22 ~~35.~~ (Twice Amended / Presently Amended) A method of etching a shaped cavity in a substrate, wherein the method comprises:

a) an initial cavity etch step during which said substrate is etched to form a shaped cavity using an initial process chamber pressure; and

b) at least one additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 25% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, wherein etching is performed using a plasma which consists ~~generated from a source gas consisting~~ essentially of chemically reactive species generated from SF_6 ~~and Ar~~ which are used in combination with species generated from an inert gas.

C! 24 ~~36.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~35~~ 22, wherein said at least one additional etch step includes a first etch step which is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 30% to about 50% lower than said initial process chamber pressure.

25 ~~37.~~ (Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~36~~ 24, wherein said first etch step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is about 30% lower than said initial process chamber pressure.

26 ~~38.~~ (Previously Added / Twice Amended / Currently Amended) ~~The method of Claim 37,~~ A method of etching a shaped cavity in a single crystal silicon substrate, wherein the method comprises:

a) an initial cavity etch step during which said single crystal silicon substrate is etched to form a shaped cavity using an initial process chamber pressure; and

b) at least one additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 25 % lower than said initial process chamber pressure, wherein etching is performed using a plasma generated from a source gas comprising SF_6 and Ar, wherein said at least one additional etch step includes a first additional etch step which is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 30% to about 50% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, and wherein said at least one additional etch step further includes a second additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 40% lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of said first additional etch step.

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27 ~~38~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim ~~38~~ 26, wherein said second additional etch step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 40% to about 50% lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of said first additional etch step.

28 ~~40~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) ~~The method of Claim 35 or Claim 36 or Claim 39;~~ A method of etching a shaped cavity in a single crystal silicon substrate, wherein the method comprises:

a) an initial cavity etch step during which said single crystal silicon substrate is etched to form a shaped cavity using an initial process chamber pressure; and

b) at least one additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 25% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, wherein etching is performed using a plasma generated from a source gas comprising SF_6 and Ar, and wherein, subsequent to said at least one additional etch step, an etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 80% to about 100% of said initial process chamber pressure.

29 ~~41~~. (Previously Added) The method of Claim ~~40~~ 28, wherein said etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is about 90% of said initial process chamber pressure.

30 ~~42~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~35~~ ~~38~~ 26 or Claim ~~40~~ 28, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of O_2, HBr, Cl_2, N_2, and combinations thereof.

31 ~~43~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~35~~ ~~38~~ 26 or Claim ~~40~~ 28, wherein said plasma source gas further comprises an additive gas selected from the group consisting of Ar, O_2, HBr, Cl_2, N_2, and combinations thereof, wherein said additive gas is provided in an amount sufficient to improve profile control during etching.

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Cont 23 ~~44~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~35~~ 22 ~~or Claim 42 or Claim 43~~, wherein said ~~plasma source~~ inert gas ~~further comprises an essentially nonreactive, diluent gas~~ is selected from the group consisting of Ar, He and Xe.

32 ~~45~~. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~35~~ 22, ~~38~~ 26 or Claim ~~40~~ 28, wherein said method includes performing the following steps prior to said initial cavity etch step: etching said substrate to a predetermined depth to form a shaped opening, then forming a conformal protective layer overlying at least a sidewall of said shaped opening, wherein said protective layer comprises a material having a different etch selectivity than said substrate.

33 ~~46~~. (Previously Added) The method of Claim ~~43~~ 32, wherein said protective layer comprises silicon oxide.

47. (Cancelled, Without Prejudice)

48. (Cancelled, Without Prejudice)

49. (Cancelled, Without Prejudice)

34 50. (Previously Added / Twice Amended / Currently Amended) ~~The method of Claim 48,~~ A method of etching a shaped cavity in a substrate, wherein the method comprises:

a) etching said substrate to a predetermined depth to form a shaped opening;

b) forming a conformal protective layer overlying at least a sidewall of said shaped opening, wherein said protective layer comprises a material having a different etch selectivity than said substrate;

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c) an initial cavity etch step during which said substrate is etched to form a shaped cavity using an initial process chamber pressure; and

d) at least one additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 25% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, wherein said at least one additional etch step includes a first additional etch step which is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 30% to about 50% lower than said initial process chamber pressure, and wherein said at least one additional etch step further includes a second additional etch step during which continued etching of said shaped cavity is performed using a process chamber pressure that is at least 40% lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of said first additional etch step.

35 51. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Previously Amended) The method of Claim 34 50, wherein said second additional etch step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within

a range of about 40% to about 50% lower than the process chamber pressure used during the performance of said first additional etch step.

36 52. (Previously Added / Once Amended / Currently Amended) The method of ~~Claim 47 or Claim 48 or~~ Claim 34 50, wherein, subsequent to said at least one additional etch step, an etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is within a range of about 80% to about 100% of said initial process chamber pressure.

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37 53. (Previously Added) The method of Claim 36 52, wherein said etch finishing step is performed using a process chamber pressure that is about 90% of said initial process chamber pressure.